



John L. Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR STEPHEN WOODS

MINUTES

**NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
HELEN NELSON ROOM – TOWN HALL
7:35P.M.**

APRIL 5, 2012

Mayor Woods called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. in the Helen Nelson Room of the Town Hall.

I & II PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & ROLL CALL

Councilors Present

Councilor Borjeson
Councilor Bottalico
Councilor Castelle
Councilor Cohen
Councilor DelBuono
Councilor Klett
Councilor McBride
Councilor Nagel
Mayor Woods

Staff Present

John Salomone, Town Manager
Ann Harter, Finance Director
Lisa Rydecki – Deputy Finance Director
Jaime Trevethan – Executive Assistant to the Town Manager
Linda Irish-Simpson – Clerk of the Council

III PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

IV CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. Adjustments to Town Council's Tentative Budget, if needed

Councilor DelBuono moved the following:

Be it resolved the Newington Town Council proposes the following adjustments to the 2012-13 budget:

Item 1: Increase Transfer from Capital Non-Recurring Fund for balance of Fenn Road Access Road by \$450,000.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Bottalico.

Councilor Bottalico stated the money had been put into the fund for the access road from Fenn Road to National Welding. The money has been in the account for four years and he felt it should be placed back into the budget for tax relief. He felt that State would give a grant for the cleanup needed at National Welding.

Ann Harter explained the money would increase revenue and there was a revenue item called Transfer from Capital Non-Recurring Fund. There would need to be another resolution to move the money to the General Fund. Councilor Castelle was concerned that this would reduce assets and therefore reduce the General Fund Account. He stated that if the \$450k was put in the operating budget this year, they would have to raise the same amount of money next year and the Council needed to take a longer view of things. Mayor Woods indicated it would be a wash in this year's budget but create a hole in next year's budget. He stated that by taking it from a reserve account and putting it in the General Fund it would not be in reserve any longer since it would be spent. Mayor Woods did not want the fund to go below \$10 million dollars, which the resolution would do.

John Salomone explained that the money had been designated for the access road that it appears the State would be willing to pay for the access road and if so, the \$450k would be available. It was Mr. Salomone's recommendation to hold onto the money because if the Town got a grant the reserve money could be used as a match towards the grant to help clean up the site. If the money was returned to the General Fund, the Town would not have the ability to match the grant since the money would have been reappropriated.

Councilor Bottalico said each year the Town added money to the account which currently had \$2,200,000 in it. He stated money was added for radios, equipment, and many items each year. He did not want to see the money sit unused in an account when the Council could give the taxpayers a break. Councilor Bottalico did not want to put any more money into tearing the building down and felt the State should take care of it when the busway went in.

Councilor Klett stated that the State had indicated they did not want the Town's share of the \$450k because they wanted to control the road. She understood Councilor Bottalico's position about not wanting to spend more money on the project since she felt the State would buy the entire site from the Town for the busway. She felt that creating a hole for next year was not a good idea since it could be worse next year than the current year. Councilor McBride felt Councilor Bottalico was putting the cart before the horse. He did not want to take the money out of the account before the grant was received. When the project was over and if the money was still there, he felt that would be the time to discuss the resolution.

Mayor Woods indicated that by decreasing the taxes by the amount proposed, next year the Council would have to take \$3M out of the Fund Balance just to stay even. He felt the taxpayers were getting a tax break in the current budget and could not support the proposed amendments.

Councilor Bottalico stated the remainder of the proposed amendments should not be considered at all by the Council. Councilor Klett indicated she wanted the Council to vote on the proposal before the Council.

The motion was defeated by a roll call vote 6 – 3.

Councilor Borjeson	N
Councilor Bottalico	Y
Councilor Castelle	N
Councilor Cohen	N
Councilor DelBuono	Y
Councilor Klett	N
Councilor McBride	N
Councilor Nagel	Y
Mayor Woods	N

V CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS
A. Transfers within the Town's Capital Projects Funds

Ann Harter explained the three items under consideration

1) the High School Gym Floor Replacement

The request was for transferring the balance of \$288,425 from the Gym Floor Replacement Project to the OCR Compliance Project.

2) Road Rehabilitation Project for Church Street

The project had been completed and the balance of \$15,737 was to be transferred from the Road Rehab – Church Street and Stoddard Avenue Project to the Road Reconstruction CIP account.

3) Fire Department request to use \$38,308 leftover from the Fire Co. 1 Roof Replacement for Co. 5 roof and window repair due to water damage.

Ann Harter explained action would be taken on each of the above at the next Council meeting.

VI PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

VII REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor DelBuono felt strongly the Town had a \$10M fund balance to help when there was a need. She stated it was obvious from the reading of the first proposal the Council had no flexibility as to whether or not the proposal was a good idea.

Councilor Borjeson stated he also found it disappointing and knew Councilor Bottalico had the best interests of the Town at heart but thought it insulting to question the Council's honesty or integrity.

Councilor Klett shared some of Councilor Bottalico's concerns and struggled with the vote. She stated that when she heard the proposal would create a hole for next year, it convinced her to oppose the resolution.

Councilor Cohen stated the total amount of money proposed was over \$900k. She said that some of the money in the accounts were for ongoing projects like drainage, roof work, and road work some of which never close out. She explained it was good to hold onto the original funding and add to the funds for project postponed. If the proposed money was put into the operating budget this year, what would happen next year she asked. She stated that the Town was lucky to be able to replace the \$2M each year taken out and could not support cutting another \$900k since it would have to be repaid next year.

Councilor McBride agreed with Councilor Cohen's comments. He stated that although he ran as a Democrat he and all the Council wanted what was best for the Town. He appreciated the dialogue and knew that Councilor Bottalico had the best interests of the Town at heart. He indicated that some of the projects to be cut were not done yet such as Market Square. He hoped the \$450k was not used but the Town had to be prepared to use the money.

Councilor Nagel was disappointed in the discussion and understood there was a difference of opinion. He believed the work done by Councilor Bottalico was done in good faith and agreed with his point of view.

Councilor Bottalico stated he never questioned anyone's integrity. He indicated that after doing his homework he brought to the Council what funds were available but did not question the Council's integrity at any time.

Councilor Castelle said that he and Councilor Bottalico had been marching arm in arm over the past several months and hoped he appreciated that. He had wanted to understand the implications of the proposals and could not support them.

Mayor Woods was surprised at the comments made by Councilors Bottalico, Nagel and DelBuono. He stated that they came to the budget discussions in a different way than the Democrats. He said that he had been willing to hear all their proposals but that they had cut the discussion short. He believed their ideas would put the

Town into a hole and could not support that. Mayor Woods thanked Ann Harter, John Salomone, Steve Juda, Lisa Rydecki, Jamie Trevethan, IT department and all others involved in the budget process.

VIII ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Cohen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. and was seconded by Councilor Nagel. The motion passed 9 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson
Clerk of the Council

Cc: T. Lane, Town Clerk